

# Boston Arts Academy

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## Innovation Schools Prospectus

10/6/2010

**BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY**  
**Innovation Schools Prospectus**

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# INNOVATION SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET

*This sheet must be included in all prospectus submissions.*

Proposed Innovation School Name:	<b>Boston Arts Academy</b>
Full/Partial Conversion or New:	<b>Full Conversion</b>
Proposed School Address (if known):	<b>174 Ipswich Street Boston, MA 02215</b>
Primary Contact Name:	<b>Linda Nathan</b>
Primary Contact Phone Number(s) :	<b>617-635-6470</b>
Primary Contact Fax Number(s) :	<b>617-635-8854</b>
Primary Contact Email Address:	<a href="mailto:lnathan@bostonartsacademy.org">lnathan@bostonartsacademy.org</a>

If conversion:

Existing School Name:	<b>Boston Arts Academy</b>
Existing School Address:	<b>174 Ipswich Street Boston, MA 02215</b>

Proposed Innovation School opening school year: ☐ 2010-11 ☒ 2011-2012  
 Proposed duration of innovation plan (up to five years): ☐ 3 years ☐ 4 years ☒ 5 years

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment	Total number of Staff
First Year	9-12	415	45
Second Year	9-12	415	45
Third Year	9-12	415	45
Fourth Year	9-12	415	45
Fifth Year	9-12	415	45
...			
At Full Enrollment	9-12	415	45

**Will this school serve students from multiple districts?** ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, list the towns/cities in the proposed regions.

**INNOVATION SCHOOL PROSPECTUS CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

Proposed Innovation School Name:	<b>Boston Arts Academy</b>
Proposed City/Town Location:	<b>Boston</b>

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this prospectus is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Authorized Person  Date 10/6/10

Authorized Person Information	
Print/Type Name:	<b>Linda Nathan</b>
Address:	<b>174 Ipswich Street Boston, MA 02215</b>
Phone Number:	<b>617-635-6470</b>
Fax Number:	<b>617-635-8854</b>
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:lnathan@bostonartsacademy.org">lnathan@bostonartsacademy.org</a>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Boston Arts Academy (BAA) is proud to be Boston's only public high school for the performing and visual arts. A Pilot school since opening in 1998, BAA is committed to creating innovative practices that result in increased student achievement. Boston Arts Academy seeks to become an Innovation School to demonstrate educational leadership in the arts, academics and student support. With a proven record of effective management of the Pilot areas of autonomy, BAA is well-positioned to succeed as an Innovation School.

The mission of Boston Arts Academy is to prepare a diverse community of aspiring artist-scholars to be successful in their college or professional careers, and to be engaged members of a democratic society. As a Pilot School within the Boston Public Schools, BAA is charged with being a laboratory for artistic and academic innovation, and a beacon for arts education for the school district. Boston Arts Academy serves students from all over the city of Boston who are passionate about the arts, regardless of their past academic performance.

As the district's first full-inclusion high school, BAA welcomes students with physical or learning disabilities and psychological/social challenges. Special education is a particular focus at BAA, with intensive professional development opportunities for all classroom teachers that combine cultural and cognitive, creative and wellness-centered approaches to educating the whole student. BAA has a strong history of serving deaf and hard of hearing students, and promotes deaf culture by offering American Sign Language as part of its World Languages department.

BAA's students are representative of the district as a whole. In the 2009-10 school year, 67% of the school's 420 students were from low-income families. The highest percentage of students (38%) come from Dorchester. Forty-three percent are African American; 35% are Hispanic; 14% are white; 4% are Asian; and 4% are of mixed race.

BAA offers students a unique opportunity to pursue their passion for the arts while receiving a college-preparatory academic education at the same time. BAA makes this opportunity available to all Boston residents, regardless of prior grades, test scores, or classes passed. BAA is committed to serving Boston's neediest students, even if they have never taken an art class. As evidence of the strong community interest in BAA, in 2010, 866 students applied for 95 slots.

Boston Arts Academy's dual curriculum includes a full college-preparatory academic courseload, and an intensive program of sequential and spiraling instruction in the arts. Students choose to major in dance, music (instrumental or vocal), theatre, or visual arts. Each student spends at least 10 hours per week in arts classes and an advisory curriculum supports our artist-scholars in their artistic and academic endeavors. BAA also offers occupational/vocational coursework related to the creative industries. To accommodate this demanding curriculum, BAA has a lengthened school day. Boston Arts Academy is the only high school in the state that is part of the Commonwealth's Expanded Learning Time initiative.

BAA's award-winning library supports the school's mission with extended hours both before and after school, and one Saturday morning per month. The library is also the home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Education Resource Center, which provides professional development for teachers throughout Massachusetts.

A key component of BAA's vision for the future includes the establishment of a middle school for the arts. The proposed arts middle school will expand access to serious study in the arts to students in grades 6-8. BAA is currently working on the planning and development stage. BAA plans to pursue Horace Mann Charter School status for the middle school, thus this Innovation School proposal is for the high school only.

While admission to the proposed middle school will be by lottery, admission to the high school will continue to be by audition. As noted above, BAA accepts students solely on the basis of an audition in the arts, with no regard for prior academic performance. Attendance at the BAA middle school will not be a guarantee of admission to the high school, and all Boston residents will continue to be eligible for admission, whether or not they attend the BAA middle school.

BAA takes seriously its charge to be a beacon for arts education for the school district. The school's Center for Arts in Education is a resource for educators in Boston and beyond. The Center works to support innovative educators through year-round programming and outreach.

As a Pilot school, Boston Arts Academy successfully manages autonomy in five areas: curriculum, staffing, budget, governance, and calendar/schedule. The school has also been recognized with several awards for its accomplishments in innovative teaching, learning, assessment, and interdisciplinary curriculum. As an Innovation School, BAA will be empowered to continue developing interdisciplinary curricula, alternative models of assessment, new approaches to special education, a broad array of effective supports for students, and professional development programs for educators.

BAA has experienced leadership that includes administrators, faculty, parents, students, and community members. Over the past 12 years, the school has built a strong, dynamic faculty who are committed to innovation in education, passionate about the value of the arts, and dedicated to their students. Many members of the BAA staff have been recognized for their accomplishments, including: a 2010 Boston Educator of the Year and four others from previous years, a 2007 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award winner, a 2007 Barr Foundation Fellow, a 2006 Fidelity Investments' Inspire the Future Award winner, 11 Surdna Foundation artist-teacher fellows, a 2007 recipient of the Boston Higher Education Partnership's Service Award, one of the "50 Most Influential Puerto Rican Women in Massachusetts," a 2006 Boston Neighborhood Award recipient, and the International Network of Schools for the Advancement of Arts Education's 2005 Teacher of the Year. The staff is uniquely qualified to take on a greater leadership role within the district and the Commonwealth as part of the Innovation Schools initiative. As a final testament to our success, the Kennedy Center honored BAA as a 2010 National School of Distinction in Arts Education – the first in the state of Massachusetts.

## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

As an Innovation School, Boston Arts Academy (BAA) will continue to serve as Boston's public high school for the visual and performing arts. Located on Ipswich Street in the Fenway neighborhood, BAA will continue to serve an average of 415 students per year in grades 9-12 who are residents of Boston. BAA offers a dual arts and academic curriculum, giving students with a strong interest in the arts the opportunity to receive specialized training while completing college-preparatory academic courses. BAA's unique blend of arts and academics motivates students to stay engaged in high school, and to continue on to college.



## **I. INNOVATION SCHOOL MISSION, VISION, and STATEMENT OF NEED**

### ***A. Mission Statement***

As Boston's high school for the performing and visual arts, the mission of Boston Arts Academy is to prepare a diverse community of aspiring artist-scholars to be successful in their college or professional careers, and to be engaged members of a democratic society. As a Pilot School within the Boston Public Schools, BAA is charged with being a laboratory for artistic and academic innovation, and a beacon for arts education for the school district. Boston Arts Academy serves students from all over the city of Boston who are passionate about the arts, regardless of their past academic performance.

### ***B. Vision Statement***

Boston Arts Academy's vision is to be a small, student-centered high school that reflects the diversity of Boston's neighborhoods and public schools. The essential elements of a Boston Arts Academy education include: a intensive sequential arts curriculum in dance, music, theatre and visual arts that is integrated with a college-preparatory academic curriculum; differentiated instruction, enabling students of all abilities to learn together; alternative methods of assessment to evaluate student achievement; and a welcoming, safe, and respectful school climate.

As a diverse community, BAA is deeply committed to meeting the needs of all learners. The school is proud to be the first "full inclusion" high school in the district. Special education and English Language Development is a school-wide responsibility, and all teachers and staff are committed to supporting and challenging each student.

BAA promotes and engenders the Shared Values of:

- Passion with Balance
- Vision with Integrity
- Diversity with Respect
- Community with Social Responsibility

BAA's vision includes becoming a school that:

- Graduates holistic thinkers who demonstrate interdisciplinary understanding when they integrate knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines as they create products, solve problems and offer explanations of the world around them;
- Prepares students academically artistically, and emotionally for higher education;
- Attracts and retains excellent faculty and staff;
- Supports teachers and staff with a robust professional development program, and ongoing opportunities for the development of leadership skills;
- Enhances the strength of its faculty with vibrant artists-in-residence, adjuncts of distinction, and visiting scholars who will augment the school's curriculum;



- Emphasizes wellness education, and provides a strong support system for students' physical and mental health, enabling students to effectively balance their school and family lives;
- Gives students and staff access to nutritious meal options as part of an overall commitment to wellness education;
- Embeds advancements in technology into its program so that students have all the tools necessary to succeed artistically and academically;
- Provides a highly effective mentoring and advising program that utilizes the diverse talents and networks of faculty, parents, alumni and friends from across the community;
- Engenders a sense of community, citizenship, and tradition among its students;
- Continues to innovate with expanded summer programs in both arts and academics;
- Actively involves faculty, parents/caregivers, and Board members in all aspects of decision-making, including strategic planning, budgeting, and scheduling.
- Ensures the creation of an arts middle school, offering younger students a rich, interdisciplinary curriculum with a broad-based foundation in the visual and performing arts; and
- Serves as a programmatic model and resource, through the BAA Center for Arts in Education, for local, state, national, and international schools in areas including, but not limited to: arts education, adolescent literacy, student support, interdisciplinary teaching and learning, teacher education/professional development and leadership training.

A key component of BAA's vision for the future includes the establishment of a middle school for the arts. The proposed arts middle school will expand access to serious study in the arts to students in grades 6-8. BAA is currently working on Phase 1 of this project, which includes planning the organizational structure of the new school, conceptualizing and developing the curriculum frameworks, gathering support from stakeholders, and developing plans for the new school building. BAA plans to pursue Horace Mann Charter School status for the middle school, thus this Innovation School proposal is for the high school only.

In collaboration with the Boston Public Schools and the City of Boston, BAA is investigating potential sites for a purpose-built facility to house both the middle and high schools in one grade 6-12 school complex, as the current facility is inadequate. BAA is housed in a converted warehouse building across the street from Fenway Park, which it shares with Fenway High School. The building has significant space constraints, with no room for expansion to include a middle school. The 6-12 school complex will serve students who are residents of Boston. BAA is working with city and state governing bodies to determine an adequate and accessible location. Once a suitable site is identified, BAA will move into Phase 2 of the project, which will include breaking ground on the grade 6-12 facility. Phase 2 is expected to begin by 2012.

Following is a typical day for a Boston Arts Academy Teacher.

*Monday-Thursday*

8:00-9:30	Arts and academic teaching block; Academic teachers that are not in the classroom have content team meetings with their department, meetings with teachers from other academic disciplines, meetings with special educators to discuss students with IEPs, or preparation time.
9:30-11:00	Academic teaching block. Arts teachers have content team meetings with their department, meetings with teachers from other art disciplines, meetings with special educators to discuss students with IEPs, or preparation time.
11:00-11:45	Seminar (team-taught by all teachers)
11:45- 12:15	Lunch or cafeteria duty (when applicable)
12:15-1:00	Advisory (Monday)
12:15-1:00	Tutorial (Tuesdays-Thursdays). Teachers give extra support to students in academic and arts skills. Staff also lead enrichment activities including Student Government, the school's literary magazine, and peer mentoring.
1:00-4:00	Arts and academic teaching block
4:00-6:00	Arts teaching and rehearsal block

*Friday*

8:00-9:30	Arts and academic teaching block
9:30-11:00	Academic teaching block; Arts teachers have content team meetings with their department, meetings with chairs of other art disciplines, or preparation time.
11:00-12:30	Arts and academic teaching block
12:30-12:55	Advisory
12:55-1:20	Lunch or cafeteria duty (when applicable)
1:20-3:30	Faculty meeting

Typical day for a Boston Arts Academy Student:

*Monday-Thursday*

8:00-9:30	Grades 9-10: academic classes; grades 11-12: arts classes
9:30-11:00	Academic classes, all grades
11:00-11:45	Seminar
11:45-12:15	Lunch
12:15-1:00	Advisory on Mondays; Tutorial/enrichment Tuesday-Thursday
1:05-4:00	Grades 9-10: arts classes, then dismissal
1:05-3:05	Grades 11-12: academic classes
3:05-4:35	Grades 11-12: arts classes, then dismissal
4:35-6:00	Rehearsals, arts classes, student support groups, student clubs

*Friday*

8:00-9:30	Grades 9-10: academic classes; grades 11-12: arts classes
9:30-11:00	Academic classes, all grades
11:00-12:30	Grades 9-10: arts classes; grades 11-12: academic classes
12:30-12:55	Advisory
12:55-1:20	Lunch, then dismissal
1:30-4:00	Arts classes and rehearsals taught by adjunct teachers; student support groups

### *C. Statement of Need*

Boston Arts Academy is the only designated high school for the arts in the Boston Public Schools. As such, the school offers students a unique opportunity to pursue their passion for the arts while receiving a college-preparatory academic education at the same time. BAA makes this opportunity available to all Boston residents, regardless of prior grades, test scores, or classes passed. Admission is through an audition in the arts. Due to the limited availability of arts education in many of Boston's elementary and middle schools, many potential BAA students have had little or no training in the arts. BAA is committed to serving Boston's neediest students, even if they have never taken an art class. As a result, teachers look for "raw" talent in the audition process rather than highly developed technical skills. They also look for students who are ready to work hard, take school seriously, and have a strong desire to develop as artists.

BAA's students are representative of the district as a whole. For the 2009-10 school year, 67% of the school's 415 students were from low-income families. The highest percentage of students (38%) come from Dorchester. Forty-three percent are African American; 35% are Hispanic; 14% are white; 4% are Asian; and 4% are of mixed race.

As a specialized school for the arts, Boston Arts Academy has unique needs that require autonomy, flexibility and innovation. The following examples illustrate some of the key areas over which autonomy is necessary in order for the school to implement its vision:

- Autonomy over **calendar and scheduling** gives BAA the ability to craft a schedule/calendar that balances the arts and academics. Students take a full academic course load plus at least 10 hours per week in their chosen arts major (dance, music, theatre, or visual arts). This is accomplished through a **lengthened school day** made possible by an agreement with the Boston Teachers Union that allows Pilot school teachers to work up to 95 extra hours per year without additional compensation. BAA will negotiate new terms with the BTU if the terms of this agreement require adjustment in the future. As part of the Innovation School agreement, BAA plans to institutionalize the district's current practice of paying BAA faculty for at least an additional 50 hours of extra work per year. BAA will revisit this agreement if the policies of the district change, in order to negotiate the new terms with the BTU.
- Interdisciplinary teaching and arts-infused academics are central to the school's **curriculum**, encouraging students' development as artists/scholars/citizens. BAA believes that when students are able to integrate knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines, they are better able to understand the complexities of the world around them, and discover creative solutions to difficult problems. The success of this model of teaching and learning depends on teachers having the freedom to write much of their own curriculum, using traditional textbooks and "off the shelf" materials only as supplements. BAA students learn best when the arts are incorporated into academic subjects. Therefore, autonomy over curriculum is needed in order for teachers to create innovative arts-infused curriculum units that meet the learning needs of BAA students. Innovative curricula necessitate prioritizing faculty responsibilities on the calendar, such as curriculum development, instruction and assessment.

- As an arts-focused school with a distinctive curriculum and an innovative approach to teaching and learning, BAA seeks the ability to deviate from some **district policies and procedures**. BAA seeks the ability to develop its own **assessments**, in consultation with the district, that reflect the school's unique curriculum and focus on the arts. BAA also seeks the ability to define its own **"on time" graduation rate**. Because of the school's specialized arts curriculum and the additional requirements that BAA students must meet, the school is committed to the goal of graduating every Boston Arts Academy student within six years of their freshman year. BAA's "on time" graduation rate will therefore include any student that meets this parameter. In regards to admissions, the school would like to insure that it continues to have the ability to control its **admissions process**, for both the high school and the future middle school. Admission to the high school will continue to be by audition, and admission to the middle school will be by lottery.
- Both the arts and academic curricula at Boston Arts Academy require **teachers with specialized knowledge** and a willingness and ability to innovate. BAA must have the capacity to recruit and retain teachers who have unique skills and knowledge that enable them to teach in and through the arts in all subject areas. Autonomy over staffing, even in times of district-wide reduction, is critical to maintaining the fidelity of Boston Arts Academy as a school for the arts. We seek to build our professional culture, which means retaining highly qualified and committed educators. These teachers will have career awards and retirement-worthy allowances as established by the BTU.

In addition to autonomy over the teaching staff, BAA seeks autonomy over the interviewing process, selection criteria, and hiring of BASAS members, custodial, secretarial, security staff, and cafeteria workers, in order to ensure that all staff members are committed to the BAA model of student-centered education.

- Autonomy over school **governance** is a key element of BAA's success. The school's Board of Trustees functions as its School Site Council. The Board of Trustees sets the overall mission, philosophy, and policies of the school, has fiduciary oversight for the school, and supports its fundraising activities. The Board of Trustees is comprised of community members, representatives from the ProArts Consortium of colleges, BAA parents, faculty, and one student representative. It is a key means of ensuring that the school is governed by a coalition of invested BAA constituents and community members.
- The school's dual curriculum requires additional resources beyond its allocation from the school district. Autonomy over the **budget** is necessary in order for the school to control spending and direct resources in the most effective way possible. Through the Boston Arts Academy Foundation, a separate non-profit organization, BAA raises funds to close the gap between its allocation from the school district and its annual financial needs. BAA would like continued and expanded freedom to pursue private and public funding opportunities that may benefit the school through the Boston Arts Academy Foundation with appropriate consultations with the district.

## **II. HOW WILL AUTONOMY and FLEXIBILITY BE USED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE and STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?**

### ***A. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment***

Boston Arts Academy seeks the freedom to structure curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices to best meet students' learning needs. While acknowledging that all public schools are expected to administer any state-required test, the school requests the flexibility to best determine additional school-based curriculum and assessment practices that will prepare students for state assessments. This includes:

- Boston Arts Academy requests freedom from local district curriculum requirements.
- Boston Arts Academy requests the ability to structure programs and services for ELL and special education students in ways that best meet their needs, while being mindful of state and federal laws and regulations.
- BAA requests the ability to set its own graduation requirements, with an emphasis on competency-based, performance-based assessment.
- BAA requests freedom from required district professional development

Increased autonomy will help the school address the following areas of its strategic plan:

#### **Curriculum**

The Innovation School designation will help BAA pursue model programs that will be replicable in traditional, as well as in specialized schools. As noted above, BAA teachers write much of their own curricula. Autonomy over curriculum gives teachers the flexibility to try new approaches and tailor the curriculum to the needs of their students. As an Innovation School, BAA will continue to develop more programs where the arts are used to help all students understand challenging material. Examples of current initiatives illustrate BAA's approach to curriculum development:

- *Adolescent Literacy Initiative:* Literacy is a primary focus for BAA, as many students enter high school reading significantly below grade level. Several years ago, the school developed a successful summer reading program, and is currently piloting a literacy instruction program that operates during the school year. Students' reading skills are evaluated at the beginning and end of freshman year using the Gates-McGinitie reading test, and placed in appropriate Seminar course groupings. Both the Gates-McGinitie and Diagnostic Assessment of Reading are used to monitor the progress of the school's neediest readers. A flexible curriculum and schedule are key to the success of this initiative, as are strong relationships with community partners such as the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Lesley University, Tufts University, Simmons College, and Massachusetts General Hospital.
- *Interdisciplinary Curriculum:* Interdisciplinary teaching and learning are central to the school's educational philosophy. Arts and academics are integrated whenever possible. BAA is currently developing new curricula exploring the connections between math, art,



science, technology, and engineering. The new curricula will challenge students to apply and synthesize knowledge from various disciplines, and will provide students with authentic opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of complex concepts. Stressing hands-on, experiential activities, BAA's new math and science curricula will push students to engage in higher level thinking and problem solving.

- Examples of current interdisciplinary curricula include: a Math 2 unit where students learn about geometry, trigonometry, and technical theatre. Students are asked to design a lighting plan for a performance in a black box theater. They have to use their knowledge of trigonometry and circular equations in a coordinate plane to calculate which parts of the stage would be covered with lights, and illustrate the results. Another example is a unit on the women of the Harlem Renaissance, which is taught in Humanities class. In this unit, students study the history, literature, music, and visual arts of the era. The unit was developed collaboratively by the Humanities, Music, and Visual Arts faculty.
- *Senior Project:* Beginning in junior year, Senior Project is the capstone experience for all BAA graduates. As juniors, students begin to research the needs of their community, and community organizations that work to address those needs. As seniors, each student develops a program that uses his or her art form to address a community need. On their own, students identify a community organization to work with, and write a grant proposal for their program. An outside panel of educators, artists, and community members reviews both the written proposals and students' oral presentations. In order to graduate, students must score at the proficient level in a number of areas. To succeed in this unique program, students must synthesize knowledge from all areas of the BAA curriculum, act as entrepreneurs in developing new programs, and communicate their ideas to people outside of the school in both written and verbal forms.
- *Engineering:* Through a partnership with the Museum of Science, BAA helped develop the Museum's high school engineering curriculum. All BAA 9<sup>th</sup> graders study engineering through this innovative curriculum that furthers the concept of "art as science; science as art." The engineering curriculum is highly engaging for BAA students, as it allows them to put their design skills and visual arts training to work in the context of science class.
- *Career-Related Curriculum:* Understanding the highly competitive nature of the professional arts world, BAA includes occupational/vocational coursework related to the creative industries in its curriculum. Training in technical theatre includes costume design and building, set design and building, lighting design, make-up design, stage management, and front of house management. Graphic design, music production, and media arts are also studied, giving students a range of opportunities for careers in the arts.

### Instruction and Student Support

- *Special Education and ELL:* BAA is the district's first full-inclusion high school. About 40% of BAA students have identified learning disabilities, second language issues, or poor literacy skills arising from a variety of circumstances. BAA serves its special education and ELL students through a combination of intensive teacher training, use of outside experts from community partners, assistive technology, and innovative teaching and assessment methods. At BAA, the whole school focuses on special education and language development. The school has raised private funds to train all classroom teachers in the best practices of special education. Special education teachers co-teach with

regular education teachers in a “push in” model, minimizing the need to pull students out of class. BAA encourages all teachers to pursue dual-certification in Moderate Disabilities or English Language Learners.

- *Heterogeneous Classrooms:* Boston Arts Academy is committed to students of mixed abilities learning together in the same classroom. All BAA teachers are trained in differentiated instruction, so that they can provide each student with the appropriate level of instruction, challenge, and support. BAA’s collaborative teaching model with classroom teachers and special educators (noted above), strengthens the school’s ability to pursue this innovative model for high school classrooms.
- *Personalization:* BAA teachers and staff are dedicated to giving each student a personalized learning experience. Rather than placing students in specific tracks, BAA teachers and student support staff discuss each individual student’s strengths and learning challenges, and design personalized programs of study.
- *Advisory:* In Advisory, groups of 8-10 students meet twice each week with a faculty advisor. The groups are mixed by age within each arts major, giving students mentoring opportunities. Students stay with the same advisor for four years, ensuring that each student is known well by at least one adult at the school. Each term, Advisories discuss one of BAA’s Shared Values: Passion with Balance, Vision with Integrity, Diversity with Respect, and Community with Social Responsibility. Students also develop personal wellness goals and action plans to be carried out during the school year. Advisors ensure that their students meet graduation requirements, and discuss post-high school plans. They play a critical role in ensuring that students are not only prepared for high school graduation, but also meet college admission deadlines or enroll in vocational training programs.
- *Seminar:* Seminar is a daily class for all students that focuses on building reading and writing skills. The instructional model is unique, in that the class is team-taught by one arts and one academic teacher. All BAA faculty members teach Seminar, ensuring that literacy is viewed as a critical element of the entire curriculum.
- *Tutorial:* In order to promote its school-wide goal of Seriousness of Purpose, BAA has established a common support and tutorial block on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. For the first marking term, students concentrate on academic and arts skills under the guidance of their Seminar teachers. After the first marking term, students who continue to need extra support are assigned to reading instruction groups, or receive direct support from their classroom teachers. Students who do not need extra support, may participate in one of three extra-curricular activities: Student Government, *Slateblue* (the school’s literary magazine), or Peer Mentoring.
- *Student Support Services:* The Student Support Team (SST) plays a critical role in the lives of BAA students. SST offers a range of services designed to support the emotional and social health of students. Many students have challenging situations at home, and require support as they balance the demands of BAA’s dual curriculum with family needs. SST services include: on-site counseling from Children’s Hospital clinicians, professionally facilitated support groups, wellness seminars tailored to the needs of each arts major, mandatory health education classes, and wellness screenings for new students. Over half the students in the school receive some type of counseling through SST.
- *Dual Enrollment:* BAA seniors with high grade point averages have the opportunity to take certain courses at ProArts Consortium colleges for credit. Autonomy over



scheduling is essential to the continued success of this program, which gives students the opportunity to acclimate themselves to the college environment. BAA has found that the dual enrollment program contributes to success in higher education, especially for those students who are the first in their families to attend college.

### Assessment

Boston Arts Academy will continue to meet state requirements in standardized testing. In addition, BAA believes that students can demonstrate their skills and knowledge through portfolios, exhibitions, and performances, rather than by standardized tests. BAA has developed its own assessments that are well aligned with and rooted in its innovative curriculum, allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills accurately.

- *Humanities:* The arts are central to the BAA Humanities curriculum, which incorporates English Language Arts, History, Philosophy, and Social Studies. As students move through the four-year Humanities sequence, they must meet key performance benchmarks, including the creation of arts products for major exhibitions, a 10-page research paper, and argumentative essays, in addition to traditional exams. If these benchmarks are not met, then students may not progress to the next course in the sequence. BAA wants to have the opportunity to show educational leaders that its assessment measures yield valid and relevant indicators of student achievement.
- *Mastery of Concepts:* BAA will continue to develop new science and math curricula that will deepen the engagement of its students in the learning process. The new curricula will be a continuation of challenging students to apply and synthesize knowledge from various disciplines, and will further provide students with authentic opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of complex concepts. Stressing hands-on, experiential activities, this curricula pushes students to engage in higher level thinking and problem solving.
- *Exhibitions:* As an Innovation School, BAA will build culminating exhibitions into more of its classes as a means for students to demonstrate their understanding of the intersection of disciplines. Teachers will test and build curriculum units with clear culminating performances, exhibitions and demonstrations of mastery. BAA believes that this is a highly effective way of challenging students to continue their intellectual immersion at high levels.
- *Critique:* Self-critique and critique of others' work is an integral part of the assessment process at Boston Arts Academy. Students learn to thoughtfully critique their own work and the work of their peers. This helps students learn to give constructive criticism and work effectively in groups, building skills that are easily transferable to the workplace.
- *Graduation Requirements:* All BAA students must complete at least the following in order to graduate:
  - Four seminar credits,
  - Four humanities credits,
  - Four math credits,
  - Three science credits,
  - Two years of the same world language (recommended),

- Earn a grade of 75% or better in their arts major for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade; earn 80% or better in their arts major for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and
- RICO reviews# in 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade, Sophomore Review, and attain proficiency on their Senior Projects (arts and academic).
- *On Time Graduation Rate:* Because of BAA's specialized arts curriculum and the additional requirements that students must meet, the school is committed to the goal of graduating every Boston Arts Academy student within six years of their freshman year. BAA's "on time" graduation rate will include any student that meets this parameter.
- *College Readiness:* In assessing students' college readiness, BAA looks at both current students' level of preparedness for college and alumni's progress in college. The school examines the following factors, among others:
  - Percentage of graduates accepted to college (average rate = 94%)
  - SAT scores
  - Dual enrollment participation and completion rate (program at ProArts Consortium colleges open to seniors with high grade point averages. See *Schedule and Calendar* below).
  - College retention data: BAA surveys alumni to learn about their post-high school experiences, especially challenges they face in college. Alumni are tracked to assess their 4, 5, and 6 year college completion rates. Data includes:
    - 653 students have graduated from BAA since 2001.
    - 97% of all BAA graduates enroll in some type of post-secondary education program.
    - 18% of BAA alumni have graduated from a four-year college.
    - 3% of BAA alumni have graduated from a two-year college.
    - 2% of BAA alumni have graduated from vocational education, alternative career, or military programs.
    - 43% of BAA alumni are still in college.
    - 30% of BAA alumni enrolled in college, but left before finishing.
    - 3% of BAA alumni have never enrolled in a post-secondary program.
    - Data from the Boston Public Schools as a whole shows that roughly 4 out of 6 high school graduates, or 64% enroll in college at some point. Only 35.5% of those students graduate from college.

## ***B. Schedule and Calendar***

Boston Arts Academy is one of 26 schools and the only high school in the Commonwealth to be a designated Expanded Learning Time (ELT) school. Each participating school provides 300 extra hours of instruction over the course of the school year. ELT schools and districts have the flexibility to create their own design and approach to the longer school day, including goals, staffing plans and schedules, and BAA does this through its full academic and arts curricula. This autonomy helps the school fulfill its mission as a beacon and a laboratory for innovation and urban school reform.

As an Innovation School, BAA will continue to operate under the model it has developed through ELT. Students are in school for 180 days per year, but a lengthened school day results in an additional 300 hours of class time over the course of the school year. School begins at 8:00 am and ends at 4:35 pm, Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, students are dismissed officially at 1:20 pm so that teachers can hold full faculty meetings until 3:05 pm. Students and teachers (including student support staff) are routinely in the building until 6:00 pm or later for rehearsals, counseling sessions, and extra-curricular activities. Prior to performances, rehearsals sometimes take place on Saturdays as well. *Please see examples of student and teacher schedules under Section I.*

As an Innovation School, Boston Arts Academy seeks the ability to set the length of school days and calendar years for both students and faculty. In particular, research supports a correlation between faculty planning time spent on teaching and learning and increased student achievement. Scheduling which allows for summer and school year faculty planning time contributes to a more unified school community and educational program. This includes:

- *Increased planning and professional development time for faculty.* BAA requests the ability to schedule professional development days that are not outlined by the district, including Saturdays or on days when the district is in session.
- *Increased learning time for students.* BAA requests the freedom to determine the beginning and end of each term within the school year.
- *School Schedule:* BAA requests the ability to organize the school schedule in ways that maximize learning time for students and planning time for faculty. For example, the school has longer days Monday through Thursday in order to have half-days for students on Fridays, thus enabling faculty to have a significant planning and professional development block every Friday afternoon. Students receive additional support and instruction from adjunct faculty and student support staff.
- *Course Titles:* BAA requests the freedom to name its own courses, and to change the names of courses as educational thinking and students' needs evolve. BAA follows a careful and deliberate process for changing course titles. This includes a review/approval process by both the Academic Dean and the Artistic Dean, and implementation by the Registrar.
- *Dual Enrollment Program:* BAA seniors with high grade point averages have the opportunity to take certain courses at ProArts Consortium colleges for credit. Autonomy over scheduling is essential to the continued success of this program, which gives students the opportunity to acclimate themselves to the college environment, while still having the support of their high school teachers. BAA has found that the dual enrollment program contributes to success in higher education, especially for those students who are the first in their families to attend college.
- *Election to Work Agreement:* The Joint BPS/BTU Collective Bargaining Agreement has shifted to an hour-for-hour compensation work agreement, which limits BAA's capacity to control its school calendar and schedule. BAA wishes to explore the feasibility of developing its own Election to Work Agreement, in collaboration with the faculty, so that the school can control its own daily schedule and annual calendar. Decisions about

compensation are discussed annually by the entire faculty. BAA teachers will continue to retain the right to re-visit the Election to Work Agreement as conditions change.

- *Relationship to BPS/BTU:* We recognize that our ability to recruit and retain highly qualified educators is central to building and sustaining our school. We understand that staff and teachers receive career awards and retirement-worthy pay as established by BTU.

### ***C. Staffing and Professional Development***

Boston Arts Academy's small size allows teachers to focus on students' needs and provide personalized instruction and support. In order to serve students well, BAA teachers function in multiple roles: as arts and academic teachers, as advisors, as special education teachers, and as wellness educators. BAA teachers have demanding jobs that necessitate additional work hours. The school's Election to Work Agreement takes the place of the BPS/BTU Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Election to Work Agreement specifies teachers' working conditions, and is revisited yearly by faculty, BTU building representatives and management. As an Innovation School, BAA teachers will retain the right to annually negotiate the Election to Work Agreement.

BAA teachers work extra hours to provide a comprehensive, well-rounded and engaging arts-based public education. The faculty is constantly reassessing the structure of teaching and learning that best serves the needs of its students. This introspection and reevaluation exemplifies the innovative tenor of BAA, and requires much more time than a traditional school day allows. BAA's democratic process for solving problems also requires time for both personal reflection and robust discussion. As an Innovation School, BAA will institutionalize the district's current practice of paying BAA faculty for an additional 50 hours of work per year. This is in addition to the 95 hours per year of unpaid extra hours to which BAA's dedicated faculty now commits itself. As conditions in the district change, BAA teachers reserve the right to revisit this pay structure.

In order to provide students with the best possible arts and academic education, Boston Arts Academy requests the freedom to hire and excess staff in a manner that best serves students' needs. This includes:

- *Staffing Patterns:* Deciding on staffing patterns which best meet the academic, artistic, social, and emotional needs of students.
- *Hiring and retaining staff that best fit the needs of the school,* regardless of their current status (member of the district or not, although every teacher hired becomes a member of the local teachers union).
- *Excessing Waiver:* Having complete autonomy over the recruitment, hiring, job descriptions, and retention of BAA's specialized faculty and staff, even in times of district-wide staff reductions. The impact of excessing is devastating to a specialized school like Boston Arts Academy. BAA's outstanding faculty of artist-teachers are both working professional artists and dedicated educators. In addition to the arts teachers, the academic teachers and student support staff also have strong backgrounds in the arts,

giving them the ability to develop arts-integrated curricula, and better understand their artist-students.

Teachers are hired specifically for their particular areas of expertise, educational philosophy, and ability to teach serious art students at the high school level. The school requires that teachers are specialized within their profession. For example, if BAA were to lose a ballet teacher, she/he would need to be replaced with another ballet specialist. A modern dance or jazz teacher would not be able to take over as the ballet instructor.

Student support staff and the school nurse have been specially trained to deal with the needs of artistic adolescents, whose intensive involvement in their arts majors can lead to specific issues such as depression and eating disorders. The faculty and staff also represent a significant investment by the BAA Foundation in privately-funded professional development. Because of these factors, BAA teachers are not interchangeable with other teachers in the school district. Boston Arts Academy therefore requests a waiver from the district's excessing policy and from seniority "bumping" practices.

- *Teacher/Leader Development and Advocacy:* As part of the school's mission, BAA is committed to developing and mentoring teachers and future school leaders to work both in the Boston Public Schools and beyond. BAA funds a member of the staff to work with student teachers and interns, and has a Director of Professional Development on staff. Both Co-Headmasters annually work with at least one future school leader who is interested in taking on a leadership role in his or her school. In addition, the Student Support Team runs a development program to train faculty in student support services.

#### ***D. District Policies and Procedures***

Boston Arts Academy requests the freedom to create a governance structure that has increased decision making powers over budget approval, principal selection and firing, and programs and policies, while being mindful of state requirements on school councils. This includes:

- *Board of Trustees:* BAA requests the ability to establish a Board of Trustees that functions as the school's site council. The Board of Trustees will have increased governing responsibilities, including the following: principal selection, supervision, evaluation and firing, with final approval by the superintendent in all cases; budget approval; and setting of school policies. The Board of Trustees will be comprised of: at least two ProArts Consortium presidents, four Family Council Board representatives, four faculty representatives, one student representative, and community members with professional expertise in a variety of fields. The Co-Headmasters are evaluated annually by the Board of Trustees, with input from the staff and students, in order to ensure strong and effective leadership.
- *Memorandum of Understanding:* BAA requests the reactivation of the original Memorandum of Understanding that was established at the inception of the school, and was eliminated by the Superintendent's office several years ago.
- *Freedom to Set Policies:* The school requests the flexibility to be freed from all district policies, and set its own policies that the school community feels will best help students to be successful. This includes, but is not limited to: policies regarding enrollment, homework, attendance, discipline policies, code of conduct, parental involvement, teacher supervision/support, and promotion/graduation requirements.



- *Pilot School Status:* Boston Arts Academy reserves the right to retain its status as a BPS Pilot School concomitant with becoming an Innovation School. In the event of a change in state, local or district policy regarding Innovation Schools, BAA reserves the right to restore its sole status as a Pilot School.

As the attached organizational chart on page 31 illustrates, Boston Arts Academy has an internal structure that invites participation from all staff members in the decision-making process. A consensus model of decision making is followed whenever possible. Faculty are involved at all levels of decision making, including the Board of Trustees. The school is run by Co-Headmasters Linda Nathan and Carmen Torres, both of whom have many years of experience as BPS administrators, and are highly regarded as innovative educators.

All faculty meet regularly in discipline teams to make decisions about the curriculum. The arts department heads meet weekly, and the academic department heads meet quarterly with the Academic Dean. Time is built into the schedule (see pages 10-11) for regular content team meetings, interdisciplinary meetings, and meetings with special education teachers, student support staff, and classroom teachers.

The school has two top-level teams that meet regularly to make decisions regarding school day and school year schedules, the allocation of student learning time, position allocations, and discretionary spending. **Instructional Leadership Team** is a forum for input on major changes to the school and conceptually testing new teaching and learning paradigms. The team meets bi-monthly, and currently includes: the Co-Headmasters, the Artistic Dean, the Academic Dean, the Librarian, the Director of Student Support Services, the Director of Student Activities and Wellness, the Family Coordinator, the Director of Teacher Partnerships, the Director of Senior Project, the Associate Director of Development of the BAA Foundation, two elected teacher representatives (one art, one academic), one representatives from Student Government, and an open seat to encourage more participation. Diverse representation from across the school on ILT fosters a collaborative decision-making process and a collaborative working style.

**Senior Management Team** manages school operations. Senior Management meets weekly to respond to issues that require timely decisions. The team is comprised of the Co-Headmasters, the Artistic Dean, the Academic Dean, the Director of Student Support Services, the Director of Students Activities and Wellness, the Registrar, the Director of Technology, the Director of Finance, the Executive Director of the BAA Foundation, and a Boston Teachers' Union representative.

### ***E. Budget***

Boston Arts Academy requests total discretion over the school's budget in order to spend in the manner that provides the best programs and services to students and their families. This includes:

- *Budget Allocation:* BAA requests a lump sum per pupil budget, the sum of which is equal to other BPS schools within that grade span.
- *Discretionary District Services:* BAA requests the ability to choose to purchase identified discretionary district services, or to not purchase them, and include them in the school's lump sum per pupil budget.
- *Rollover of Funds:* BAA requests the ability to rollover funds annually.
- *Procurement:* BAA requests the freedom to explore the possibility of different kinds of procurement.
- *Fundraising:* Because of BAA's dual arts/academic curriculum, the school incurs a number of additional costs in the areas of personnel, instructional supplies and equipment, and facilities/building security. As a result, the true cost of a BAA education far exceeds the allocation the school receives from the district. In order to close this funding gap, the Boston Arts Academy Foundation was established as a 501(c)(3) organization whose sole mission is to raise funds for the school. Through the Innovation Schools program, BAA seeks increased flexibility for the BAA Foundation, especially with regard to state and federal funding sources. Like charter schools, BAA wants the ability to apply directly for competitive federal grants.
- *Role of Senior Management Team:* Senior Management will seek faculty and staff input on the budget. Budget will support programmatic initiatives as agreed to by faculty and staff.

### III. CAPACITY of APPLICANT GROUP

BAA operates on a consensus model of decision-making whenever possible. Faculty members are involved in all senior level teams at the school, and faculty, parents, and students are represented on the Board of Trustees. Their involvement in the entire process of evaluating the feasibility of the Innovation School model is critical.

This evaluation process began in August of 2009 when a group of 34 BAA faculty, parents, staff and board members convened to discuss the Readiness Schools initiative, and the desirability of becoming a Readiness Advantage School. The meeting began with presentations by J.D. LaRock, Policy Director at the MA Executive Office of Education, and Dan French, Executive Director of the Center for Collaborative Education. A discussion was then held on the desirability of becoming a Readiness school, which was facilitated by Liz Curtis of Technical Development Corporation. The majority of those in attendance agreed to expand the conversation to the entire school community through a full faculty/staff meeting.

At that meeting, which took place on September 1, 2009 teachers were very interested to learn about the Readiness Schools initiative, and had many thoughtful observations and questions about the program. The group hoped that the Readiness designation would give the school greater autonomy in regards to the hiring and retention of teachers and staff.

After the Readiness program evolved into the Innovation Schools program, BAA decided that the Innovation model aligned with the school's mission and vision, and decided to pursue Innovation status. This document reflects the thoughts and recommendations of the BAA faculty and staff.

As proof of the strength of the BAA community, seven parents and 25 faculty/staff members were in attendance at the August 18, 2009 meeting. This process of involving the entire school community, as well as the community at-large in planning efforts, is one that BAA follows regularly. For example, BAA has involved over 125 stakeholders in the planning process for the new arts middle school. Middle School Task Force members included a rich cross-section of BPS administrators, principals, teachers, and parents; representatives from city and state arts offices; representatives from Boston arts organizations and institutions; and representatives from institutions of higher learning, including ProArts colleges, Boston University, New England Conservatory, and Harvard's Project Zero.

Boston Arts Academy's **school leadership** teams and staff are ideally suited to handle increased autonomy. BAA is run by Co-Headmasters Linda Nathan and Carmen Torres. Linda Nathan, Ed.D., is a nationally recognized figure in arts education and educational innovation who is a 2007 Barr Foundation Fellow. Her recently published book, *The Hardest Questions Aren't on the Test*, is inspiring educators across the country to re-think their curricula and school models. A 28-year veteran of the Boston Public Schools, Carmen Torres is dedicated to developing



innovative practices that enhance school climate and culture. Both women were honored in 2006 by *El Planeta* as two of the 100 people who had most influenced the Latino community.

BAA's **faculty** includes a 2010 Boston Educator of the Year and four others from previous years, a 2007 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award winner, 11 Surdna Foundation artist-teacher fellows, a 2007 recipient of the Boston Higher Education Partnership's Service Award, one of the "50 Most Influential Puerto Rican Women in Massachusetts," a 2006 Boston Neighborhood Award recipient, and the International Network of Schools for the Advancement of Arts Education's 2005 Teacher of the Year.

As noted above, the **Board of Trustees** acts as the school site council. The Board sets the overall mission, philosophy, and policies of the school; provides fiduciary oversight; hires, supervises, and evaluates the Co-Headmasters; and supports the fundraising activities of the school; . The Board is comprised of at least two ProArts Consortium presidents, four Family Council Board representatives, four faculty representatives, one student representative, and community members with an impressive range of professional expertise. The Board meets four times per school year. Meetings are open to the community, with students participating at nearly every meeting. **The Governing Council** is a smaller, "working" group of the Board of Trustees, which holds meetings five times per year that are separate from Board meetings.

**The Family Council** meets monthly and provides strong support and advocacy for the school on a number of important issues. The PCC meetings include one or both Co-Headmasters, the Family Coordinator, and representatives from BAA Student Government. The PCC works on such issues as improving the school's lunch offerings, student safety, MCAS/alternative assessments, undocumented student rights, and school facilities. The PCC also raises funds to support student activities in each arts major.

**The Family Coordinator** serves as a critical link between school and parents/caregivers. She is in constant communication with parents/caregivers, as well as with faculty so that all involved parties have access to timely information. The Family Coordinator ensures that all meetings between the school and families also involve students, while helping to negotiate complicated situations with families and facilitating difficult conversations between parents and children. Similarly, the Family Coordinator manages relationships between parents/caregivers and teachers, helping to minimize misunderstandings. A critical area of her work is advocacy. She works on issues of homelessness and immigration status which are exceedingly complex and pressing issues for students and their families. Additionally, the Family Coordinator is sensitive to families' financial issues, and helps negotiate reduced fees for extracurricular expenses such as field trips, graduation fees, and supplies.

**Strategic partnerships** with area colleges and community organizations expand opportunities for students, and provide outstanding support to faculty and staff. BAA's strong relationship with the ProArts colleges in particular, gives students opportunities such as dual enrollment, internships, and college scholarships. Shared programming allows BAA to more effectively

carry out its mission, such as a 2009 residency by South African artist Kim Berman that was a collaboration between Massachusetts College of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, and BAA. A strong internship program with Tufts University brings graduate level teaching interns to BAA for one full school year to work in partnership with a master BAA teacher.

Outside **management consultants** are used when funding allows (as at the August, 2009 forum) to help develop strategic plans and align organizational goals with capacity. Technical Development Corporation, which specializes in working with non-profit organizations, helped BAA develop its current 5-year strategic plan and has helped facilitate the planning process for BAA's proposed arts middle school.

**The Center for Arts in Education**, the dissemination and advocacy arm of the school, is a resource for educators in Boston and beyond. Over the past six years, the Center has trained hundreds of educators and administrators from around the world in the school's best practices. The Center works year-round to support innovative educators. One of its major programs is a four-day Summer Institute for Arts in Education featuring in-depth workshops in arts and academic curriculum integration, as well as in unifying frameworks that can be incorporated by non-arts schools. Through the Summer Institute, BAA has trained over 100 BPS teachers in the last three years alone. The Center also provides curriculum coaching; workshops and presentations; and administers Teachers as Artists, a competitive fellowship program for BPS arts teachers. The Center's outreach programs include: the Academy Strings violin instruction program for BPS elementary and middle school students, a Saturday dance instruction program for BPS middle school students, and the Berklee City Music Preparatory Academy, a Saturday program for students in grades 4-8.

#### **IV. TIMETABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT and ESTABLISHMENT**

Boston Arts Academy is working closely with all BAA key stakeholders, the Center for Collaborative Education, the Boston Public Schools and representatives from the Commonwealth to insure a thorough exploration in pursuit of Innovation School status. The current timeline is as follows, however BAA anticipates and is prepared for a flexible timeline moving forward:

##### May, 2010

- Intent to Apply letter sent to Superintendent of Boston Public Schools.

##### June, 2010

- Innovation Prospectus sent to full faculty for review
- Innovation Prospectus sent to BAA Board of Trustees for review
- June 22 – faculty meeting to discuss Prospectus

##### July-August, 2010

- Assessment and evaluation of Innovation Prospectus by faculty and Board of Trustees

##### August-September, 2010

- Faculty meeting for further discussion of Prospectus where edits are discussed and incorporated
- Faculty subcommittee meets to discuss particular issues of importance to teachers
- Board of Trustees and faculty review final prospectus

##### September, 2010

- Innovation Plan Committee is formed, including the applicant; the superintendent or designee; a school committee member or designee; a parent who has 1 or more children enrolled in the school; a principal employed by the district; and 2 teachers employed by the district.
- Faculty votes on Innovation Prospectus.
- BAA Board of Trustees votes on Innovation Prospectus.

##### October 2010

- October 6 - Innovation Prospectus is reviewed by 3-person committee appointed by the Superintendent
- Three-person committee has 30 days to review and vote on the prospectus

##### November 2010

- November 5 - BAA receives recommendations back from the three-person panel
- Innovation Plan Committee discusses particular issues of importance and shapes the Innovation Plan

#### December 2010

- Innovation Plan Committee presents draft to BAA Faculty for discussion, possible vote

#### December 2010/January 2011

- Innovation Plan Committee votes on Final Innovation Plan
- Final Innovation Plan submitted to BAA Faculty for 2/3 approval
- Final Innovation Plan submitted to BAA Board of Trustees for majority vote
- Final Innovation Plan submitted to Boston School Committee which must hold a public hearing and vote within 60 days of receipt



## V. MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS

As a Pilot School, Boston Arts Academy is evaluated every four years through an in-depth School Quality Review (SQR) process. In this review, teachers, staff, parents, and students analyze, examine and evaluate school-wide practices and structures. After a self-assessment is conducted, a team of experienced educators, including teachers, specialists, and administrators spend several days observing, interviewing, and collecting the data that forms the basis for its report. This report aids the Superintendent, School Committee, and BPS/BTU Joint Steering Committee in assessing the renewal of BAA's pilot status.

The SQR is an effective and valuable evaluation instrument. The inclusive process helps the school maintain a strong sense of community, and promotes transparency. BAA strongly encourages the district to adopt the SQR model for its Innovation Schools.

Following are the school's measurable annual goals:

### *1. Student Attendance*

- The 2009-10 attendance rate was 91.6%. BAA's goal is to maintain or slightly improve upon that figure.

### *2. Student Safety and Discipline*

- BAA has a mediation process for classroom behavioral problems that cannot be easily solved by the teacher. The student, teacher, and the Dean of Climate and Culture meet to discuss the student's behavior and the consequences for that behavior. An action plan is developed that all parties agree to. In 2009-10, 150 incidents required mediation. By 2012, BAA plans to reduce that figure by 10%.
- In 2009-10, there were 47 cases of suspension. By 2012, BAA plans to reduce that figure by 10%.

### *3. Student Promotion, Graduation, and Dropout Rates*

- Sophomores must maintain at least a C average in their arts classes and a passing grade in their academic classes in order to be promoted to the next grade. Juniors and seniors must maintain at least a B- average in their arts classes and a passing grade in their academic classes in order to be promoted. This policy ensures that students can handle the challenge of the dual curriculum. BAA's promotion rate is 98.5%, which the school hopes to maintain.
- BAA's graduation rate is 84%. The school's goal is to maintain that rate.
- BAA's dropout rate is 3.6%. The school's goal is to maintain that rate.

### *4. Student Achievement on the MCAS Test*

- By Spring 2012, the ELA MCAS CPI will be at or above BAA's current baseline of 92.5.
- By Spring 2012, the median ELA SGP of students will be at least 50.
- By Spring 2012, the Math MCAS CPI will be at or above 87.2.
- By Spring 2012, the Math MCAS SGP will be at least 50.

### *5. Progress in Areas of Academic Underperformance*

- By 2012, 80% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who scoring at or below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on the Gates MacGinitie Silent Reading Test, will be able to read at mastery by the end of their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. Mastery will be measured by using the Diagnostic Assessment of Reading (DAR) pretest as the baseline. Students will score 90% accuracy with good comprehension on graded passages at least one grade level above their DAR baseline by the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- By 2012, the passing rate in Math 3 will be 88% versus 78% in 2008-09. This increase in student achievement will result from a new intervention: students identified through an assessment at the end of Math 1 as needing additional math support, will take an additional math class in their sophomore year.

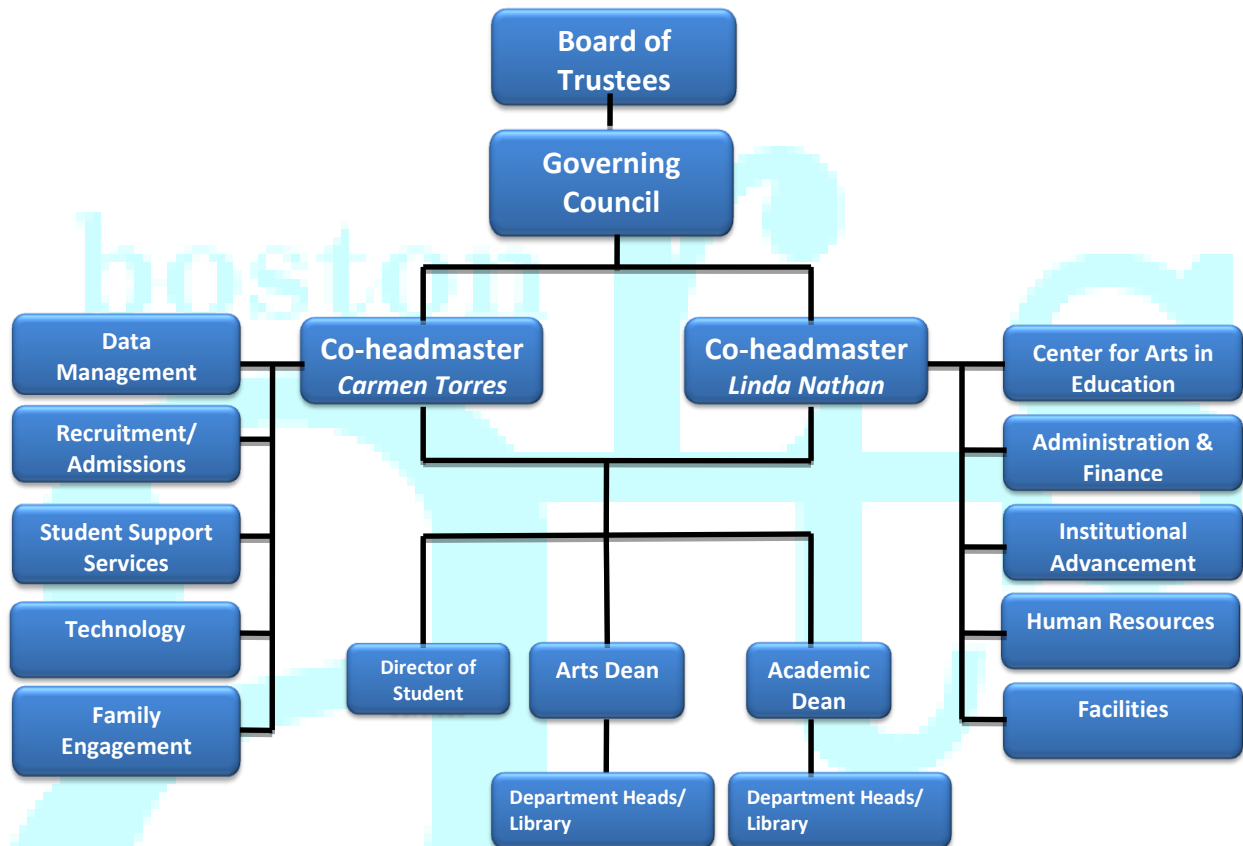
### *6. Progress Among Subgroups of Students*

Philosophically, Boston Arts Academy believes in assessing all students uniformly and following progress consistently. BAA utilizes a “push-in” model of special education teaching, which supports the school’s commitment to heterogeneous classrooms where all students learn together from the same teacher(s). In order to determine students’ progress and think critically about specific subgroups, BAA examines several categories including race, arts major, attendance, gender, students with special needs, and honor roll on a quarterly basis. Other than those assessments required by the federal/state/district (IEP process, ELL monitoring), we do not provide additional, separate documentation for students. The school also commits to progress monitoring throughout ninth grade as a means of gauging how its newest students progress throughout their first year.

### *7. Reduction of Achievement Gaps*

- By 2012 the ratio of young men of color on BAA’s honor roll will be 1 of every 3.
- Current baseline: In 2009, 1 of every 2 young white men is on the honor roll whereas 1 of every 4 young men of color/non Caucasian young men is on the honor roll. Therefore, young men of color are underrepresented on the honor roll. BAA does not see a similar under-representation with young women of color.
- College Entrance and Graduation Rates: 92% of our graduates enter college. We seek to improve the college retention and graduation rates of our students.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Boston Arts Academy is excited to be part of the first cohort of schools in the Academic Achievement Framework as part of the Accelerated Agenda. BAA's belief that every student needs to be prepared for college or a career after graduation aligns well with the Accelerated Agenda. BAA has a low dropout rate (2.9%) compared to district (8.9%) and state (3.8%) averages. Its four year adjusted graduation rate is 87.7% compared to the district average of 67.7%. These figures, coupled with the school's 94% college acceptance rate, demonstrate the effectiveness of the BAA's curriculum and support programs.

BAA strives to continue the success of our students through two of our founding principles, literacy and student support. At BAA, all academic and arts faculty commit to teaching literacy. BAA's Student Support Team helps the faculty identify social/emotional barriers with which our students struggle, and then provides the structure and resources needed to address these issues. Since 1998, BAA's faculty has studied the literature about adolescent literacy development and social/emotional barriers in order to meet the complex needs of our students. A solution at the intersection of these two elements creates a pathway towards success for many of our students.

Our admissions process is academic-blind and audition based and students enter BAA with a very broad range of prior skills and needs. While some students have documented learning disabilities, many have unidentified learning challenges, and others have had extended absences from school, or have suffered from emotional traumas. The data shows that, on average, one-third of every freshman class entering BAA reads at least one grade level below the norm as measured by the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. Additionally, 40% of incoming students need social/emotional support to be healthy members of the school's culture.

Boston Arts Academy recognizes that teaching literacy to different learning styles and working with students with social/emotional barriers requires an investment in many different techniques and methods. BAA faculty has participated in professional development sessions led by experts in the literacy field. These experts have helped classroom teachers and special educators better understand both the identification of learning disabilities/literacy issues and effective strategies for working with students. As part of our commitment to help all students succeed, BAA uses a push-in model for special education, ELL, and literacy instruction whenever possible. The special education faculty, a part of the Student Support Team, team-teaches with classroom teachers, minimizing the need for pull-outs. Assistive technology, software programs, and special equipment help facilitate this approach with a variety of learning challenges.

BAA believes that literacy and social/emotional barriers are intertwined as we prepare our students for college or a career after graduation. Both of these challenges, if not confronted head on, can lead to poor attendance, incomplete instruction, and underdeveloped skills. It is for all of these reasons that BAA's founding and continued work aligns with the Accelerated Agenda.



# Katherine Sloan

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

President

Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston, MA, 1996-present

- Initiated New Partnership with the Commonwealth, a project enabling MassArt to increase revenues from private sources, foster entrepreneurial activities, grow enrollments from outside New England, and increase autonomy of the college Board of Trustees
- As a member of the Colleges of the Fenway Consortium, developed major collaborative programs with neighboring colleges in areas of student services and activities, shared technology, cross registration, joint academic programs, shared International Center, and shared facilities for dining, health services, fitness, residence, and bookstore
- Developed new Artists' residence for student housing, expanded and renovated dining facilities and campus center, and renovated Pozen Center for Interrelated Media; in feasibility and design phases for new Design and Media Center, Center for Contemporary Art, and for an in-construction new 475 bed residence hall
- Increased Annual Fund five-fold over ten year period and annual Auction proceeds by 100%
- Announced multi-year \$140 million comprehensive campaign for MassArt, led by expanded and strengthened MassArt Foundation Board; exceeded original campaign goal of \$10 million in year 1; exceeded \$15 million by year 2; now planning to reach new goal of \$30 million
- Developed new academic programs at two off-site locations, including low-residency MFA program in Provincetown, MA. and summer visual arts program at Bennington, College, VT; implemented new undergraduate program in Animation, and new graduate programs in Architecture (M.Arch) and Art Teaching (M.A.T.)
- Strengthened MassArt's role as a major cultural and educational resource to the greater Boston area
- Expanded substantially MassArt's international programs for students, now offering 11-12 credit travel courses each year

## PAST EXPERIENCE

President

North Hennepin Community College, Brooklyn Park, MN, 1994 – 1996

President

Greenfield Community College, Greenfield, MA, 1988-1994

Dean, Academic Affairs (Chief Academic Officer)

Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester, MA, 1984 - 1988

Dean, Visual and Performing Arts and Campus Director

Dawson College, Montreal, Quebec, 1981 – 1984

## FACULTY EXPERIENCE

Associate Professor of English and Humanities

Dawson College, Montreal, Quebec, 1973 - 1981

Assistant Professor of English

Lehigh County Community College, Allentown, PA, 1971 - 1973

Instructor of English

Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, 1966 – 1969

## EDUCATION

Carnegie-Mellon University	D.A., English
Purdue University	M.A., English
Mercyhurst College	B.A., English
Concordia University	Graduate Program in Institutional Administration

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

### Higher Education

- Commissioner, Commission on Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) (2006-12)
- Executive Committee, National Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD)
- Visiting team member and team chair, Commission on Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- Visiting team member and team chair, National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)
- Executive Committee, Massachusetts Campus Compact
- Editorial Board, *Connections*, Journal of New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE)
- Past Board Member, New England Board of Higher Education
- Member and past Chair, Colleges of the Fenway, Inc. (consortium of six neighboring colleges, including MassArt, Simmons, Emmanuel, Wheelock, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and Wentworth Institute of Technology)
- Member and past Chair, Boston ProArts Consortium (MassArt, School of the Museum of Fine Art, Emerson College, Boston Conservatory, Boston Architectural Center)
- Executive Committee and past Chair, Boston Higher Education Partnership
- Member and past Chair, Council of Massachusetts State College Presidents

### Cultural/Community

- Current Board Chair and founding Chair, Boston Arts Academy, a pilot public school for the performing and visual arts
- Executive Committee, Medical Academic and Scientific Community (MASCO), 2008, Vice president, MASCO 2009-11
- Member, Massachusetts Creative Economy Council
- Chair, Leadership Committee and co-founder, Design Industries Group of Massachusetts
- Member, Boston Public Schools Arts Expansion Initiative Advisory Board
- Mayor's Advisory Committee, Create Boston
- Executive Committee and past Chair, Fenway Alliance and Cultural District
- Past member, New England Creative Economy Council
- Member, Boston Cultural Directors Group
- President's Advisory Committee, Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities

## PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Numerous published articles and presentations on cultural issues, higher education consortia, fund-raising and planning. (Representative list available on request)

## **LINDA F. NATHAN**

217 Erie Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617-868-0072

### **EDUCATION**

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
Doctor of Education, 1995  
Conant Fellow, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1990

Emerson College, Boston, MA  
Masters of Art, Performing Arts, 1989

Antioch University, Cambridge, MA  
Masters of Education, Management and Administration, 1982

University of California, Berkeley, CA  
B.A. *cum laude*, Spanish and Social Studies, 1977

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION**

#### **Boston Arts Academy**

**1998-present**

*Founding Headmaster.* Selected to lead Boston's first public high school for the visual and performing arts.

Responsible for all instructional, programmatic, professional development, external relations, fundraising, Board development for the school; established Center for Arts in Education at Boston Arts Academy

#### **Fenway Middle College High School at Bunker Hill Community College** **1990-**

**1998**

*Co-Director.* Initiated and implemented first middle college high school in Boston.

Responsible

for instructional, programmatic, development, professional development, and managerial facets of the middle college operations

*Teacher.* Taught theater, humanities and Spanish

#### **Fenway Program, English High School, Boston, MA** **1990**

**1984-**

*Assistant Director, Interdisciplinary Department Head and School Development Officer.* Responsible for supervision and evaluation, curriculum development and serving as an effective liaison for the program within the community.

*Teacher.* Taught Social Issues and Theater.

#### **Tobin School, Boston, MA**

**1982-1984**

*Bilingual Teacher of Math, Social Studies, Spanish and Theater.*  
As Theater Arts Director and Lead Teacher, co-authored start-up proposal for Tobin Academic Performing Arts School, Boston's first performing arts middle school.

**Edison Middle School, Boston, MA**

**1979-1981**

*Bilingual Teacher of Math, Career Education, Spanish and Theater*  
Director of after-school theater program for two middle and one high school

**San Juan Public Schools, San Juan, Puerto Rico**

**1978-1979**

*ESL Reading Teacher for grades 3-5*

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THEATER**

**Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA**

**1979-1998**

*Playwright and director* for over a dozen plays performed in the Boston area. Many of the plays were performed bilingually (Spanish/English)

**Emerson Stage Players, Emerson College, Boston, MA**  
**1988**

*Actor* in Emerson College's touring children's show

**El Pueblo Nuevo Multicultural Theater Program, Boston, MA**  
**1979-1984**

*Director and Manager* not for profit theater arts program. Responsibilities included fundraising, managing the budget, authorizing grants and recruiting students and staff

**Boston University Summer Theater Institute, Boston, MA**  
**1983-1984**

*Actor and Director*

**OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

*Appointee, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*  
*task force on assessment*

**2006**

*Adjunct Lecturer in Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education*  
**2003-present**

*Consultant* **Grupo Cruz del Sur**, Academia de Artes, Argentina.

**1999-present**

*Develop arts-infused schools in 16 different rural and urban public schools*

*Co-founder and Board member*, **Center for Collaborative Education**,

**1996-present**

**Boston**, a not-for-profit dedicated to educational reform

*Committee Member*, **National Academy of Science's Commission on the Science of Learning** **1995-1998**

*Appointee*, **American Academy of Arts and Sciences Convocation on**

**1994**

*Education*

## **PUBLICATIONS**

*Las Preguntas Fundamentales No Están en el Examen: Lecciones de una Escuela Innovadora.* (July 2010) Buenos Aires, Argentina: Papers Editores.

*The Hardest Questions Aren't on the Test: Lessons from an Innovative Urban School.* (October 2009) Boston, MA: Beacon Press

"Why the Arts Make Sense in Education," *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 2008

"What's Been Lost in the Bubbles", *Educational Leadership*, October 2008

"Teachers Talking Together: The Power of Professional Community," *Horace*, April 2008

"The Art of Evaluation and Professional Development," *Principal Leadership*, Sept. 2005

Co-Author with Sloan, Katherine, "Art Transforms Education: A Boston Pilot School Puts Student Learning Center Stage," *The Journal of the New England Board of Higher Education*, Summer 2005

"The Development of Critical Minds: Reclaiming the Vision for Urban Schools," *Perspectives*: Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Sept./Oct. 2004

"A Day in the Life of a School Leader," *Educational Leadership*, ASCD, February, 2004

"The Larger Purpose of Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan*, February, 2004

"Academia Boston de las Artes: Transforming Education in Argentina," *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*, Winter, 2004

"Creating Equity from the Ground up," *Horace*, Feb/March, 2003

“Are Standards the Answer?” in *Best Practices, Best Thinking, and Emerging Issues in School Leadership*, eds. Owings and Kaplan (2003). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

### **“Through the Lens of Art” Educational Leadership, ASCD, October, 2002**

“The Human Face of the High-Stakes Testing Story,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2002

“A Reason to be in the World: How Arts Education Can Transform Students’ Lives,” *Perspectives*, Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, March, 2002

“Transforming Schools Through Art: From Boston to Argentina,” *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*, Winter, 2001

“Habits of Mind.” *Boston Review*. Winter, 2000

Contributor with Bransford, Brown, Cocking, editors *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School*. (1999) Washington, DC: National Academies Press

Co-author with Myatt, Lawrence. “A Journey toward Autonomy,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, December, 1998

Co-author with Myatt, Lawrence. “One School’s Journey in the Age of Reform,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1996

Co-author with Myatt, Lawrence. *The Travails and Triumphs of Charters and Pilots in Transforming Public Education: A New Course for America’s Future*, ed. Clinchy. (1996) New York, NY: Teachers College Press

“Assessing Assessment: Lessons of Innovative Practice in Urban Schools.” *Daedalus*, Fall 1995

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Arts Schools Network, 2009

Human Scale Schools Conference, Nottingham, England, 2008

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, 2007, 2009

Massachusetts College of Art and Design, 2007

UNESCO, World Conference on Arts Education, Lisbon Portugal, 2006

Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2000

American Jewish Congress, 2000

Harvard Graduate School of Education Research Symposium, 1996

American Educators Research Symposium, 1995

Coalition of Essential Schools, 1991, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2009

## **AWARDS**

Morton R. Godine Medal for Service to the Community, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, 2009

Barr Foundation Fellow, Class of 2007

Fidelity Inspire the Future Award, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 2006

Nadia Boulanger Award, Longy School of Music, 2004

## **LANGUAGE FLUENCY**

Spanish and English

Working knowledge of Portuguese



## Carmen M. Torres

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### Experience

2007-Present

Boston Arts Academy

Boston MA

#### **Co-Headmaster**

- Oversee all aspects of Internal Climate and Culture including Supervision and Evaluation of Dean of Climate
- Administrator on Student Support ,Special , and Deaf Education teams
- Supervision of recruitment and admissions
- Supervision and Evaluation of Faculty and Staff
- Mentor Principal for Principal Interns
- Supervise and work closely with the Family Advocate
- Work closely with the Boston Public Schools and the Center for Collaborative Education
- Work with the Board of Directors
- Support the Co-Headmaster in implementing the yearly School wide goals, Mission and Vision

1998-2007

Boston Arts Academy

Boston, MA

#### **Assistant Headmaster**

- Assisted the Headmaster in the development and leadership of a pilot high school that excels in artistic and academic education.
- Created and sustained a school environment that fosters among all students educational achievement, respect for self and others, personal responsibility, multicultural understanding, and passion for the arts.
- Managed student discipline process.
- Developed and implemented student recruitment procedures and policies.
- Acted as lead administrator in the Student Support Team.
- Assisted in the development of a constructive role for the Academy in the improvement of education in Boston, both artistic and academic, with attention to relationships to feeder schools, and other pilot schools, other high schools, and the Boston Public Schools Administration.
- Oversight of the Special Education Team.
- Supervised and evaluated faculty and staff.



1992-1998

Fenway Pilot High School Charlestown, MA

**CVS/Fenway Program Coordinator**

- Program development, curriculum development, team facilitation and supervision of program.
- Recruitment, teaching and supervision of student internships.
- Maintenance of all aspects of the program including communication among staff, parents, and collaborators.
- Management of budget, data collection, and reporting to external agencies.

1988-1992

Brighton High School

Brighton, MA

**Health Careers Magnet Coordinator**

- Program development, curriculum development, team facilitation and supervision of program.
- Teaching two sections of Biology
- Recruitment, teaching and supervision of student internships.
- Maintenance of all aspects of the program including communication among staff, parents, and collaborators.
- Management of budget, data collection, and reporting to external agencies.

1987-1988 Codman Square Health Center

Dorchester, MA

**Perinatal Care Coordinator**

- Development and implementation of protocol and policies for program designed to reduce infant mortality.
- Hiring and supervision of program personnel.
- Responsible for overseeing budget and reporting to outside agencies.

**Education**

Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

- B.A. 1977
- Florence Heller Graduate School, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
- Master in the Management of Human Services, August, 1983
- Northeastern University, Boston, MA
- Principal Residency Program, 2002

**Certifications/  
Misc.**

- Secondary Principal
- Bilingual/Spanish
- Served on NEASSC Accreditation Teams
- Presented in Several National Conferences
- Representative on School Boards
- Lead work on a national level with schools on developing positive school climate and culture
- Lead in program development for Puerto Rico Collaborative
- Boston Cultural Council Voting Member